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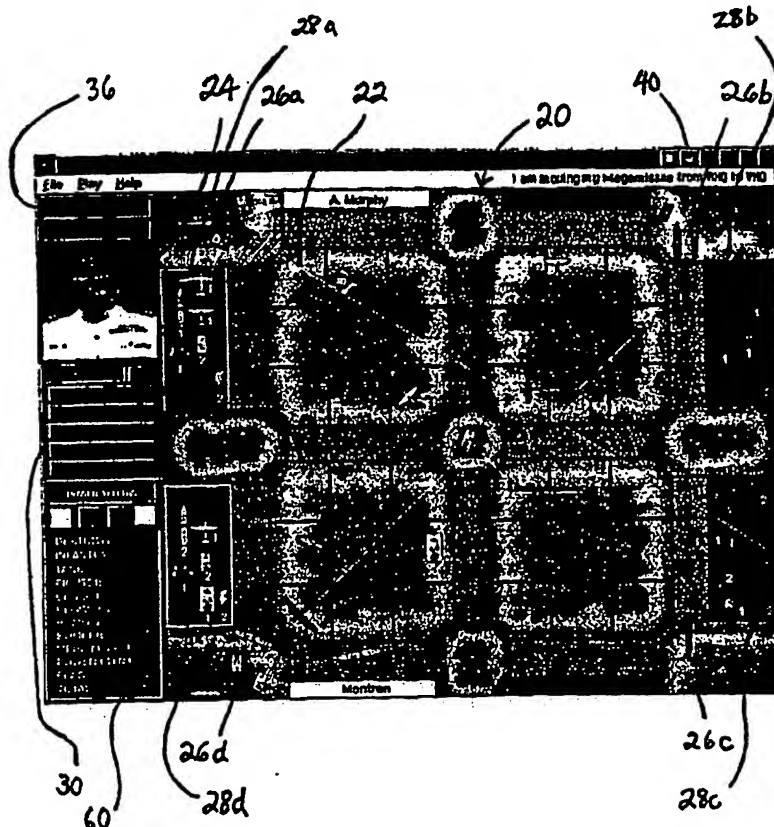
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(54) Title: **COMPUTER GAME**

(57) Abstract

There is provided a method for moving images of game pieces for a board game on a computer. The computer is provided with a memory, a processor, a display screen, and a user input interface. The user input interface comprises a cursor, a user control device (30) for moving the cursor on the display screen, and an actuator for instructing the processor to execute a routine in response to the position of the cursor. In accordance with the method, an image of the game board (20) is provided on the display screen. The game board (20) is divided into a plurality of sectors. Images of a plurality of game piece icons are provided on the display screen, as well as a cursor image. The cursor image is positioned on an image of a game piece icon positioned in a first sector. The processor is instructed to execute a routine to form a second image of the game piece icon and to drag the second image of the game piece icon from a first sector to a second sector. The second image of the game piece icon is dragged from the first sector to the second sector. The processor is then instructed to execute a release routine to position the second image of the game piece icon in the second sector.



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COMPUTER GAME

Technical Field

This invention relates to computer games. In one aspect, this invention relates to a computerized board game.

Background

The known board version of POWER "The Game" pits a user's strategic skills against opponents in a race to conquer the map. The user directs infantry, tanks, ships and air power to attack enemies and to defend the user's home base. The user's boldness and cunning are critical to successful domination of the globe.

The object of the game is for the user to eliminate opponents by occupying their home base and having infantry capture their flag.

EQUIPMENT

The equipment provided is a game board similar to that shown by Figure 1, four sets of playing pieces, each in a different color, 4 quick reference cards, 4 command pads, and a three minute timer.

Game board: The game board shows four countries, each divided into nine sectors. Each country also has a home-base sector and a Reserve located along the edge of the board next to the home base. Five islands lie between the countries. Sea lanes border the countries and islands.

Game Pieces: The game pieces consist of the following pieces in each color: 10 Power units (lightening bolts), 1 Flag, 1 Megamissile, 4 Destroyers (small ships), 22 Cruisers (large ships), 5 Fighters (small planes), 3 Bombers (large planes), 5 Tanks (small), 3 Heavy Tanks (large), 9 Infantry (single soldiers). Regiments can be formed by snapping three single infantry pieces together.

Quick Reference Cards: The Quick Reference Cards list the playing pieces, their

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maximum allowable moves per round, and their power values:

	<u>Piece</u>	<u>Maximum Moves</u>	<u>Power Value</u>
	Infantry	2	2
5	Tank	3	3
	Fighter	5	5
	Destroyer	1	10
	Regiment	2	20
	Heavy Tank	3	30
10	Bomber	5	25
	Cruiser	1	50
	Megamissile	any	*

* power value in offensive moves = unlimited

power value in defending sector = none

15 power value in exchanging = 100

Command Pads: Command pads contain a form on which the players write down the commands that they will issue during a round. The form has three columns (Piece, From, To) and five rows (to record five commands).

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Three minute timer. The three minute timer measures the time limit a player has for writing the five commands to carry out during the round.

PLAY

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Setting up

The players select their home base, a set of playing pieces, a quick reference card, and a movement pad. Each player then places the following pieces in their home base: 1 flag, 2 Infantry (single soldiers), 2 tanks (small), 2 fighters (small planes), and 2 destroyers (small ships).

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Commands

Moving and exchanging: During a round, a player is allowed up to five separate commands. These commands fall into two categories: moving and exchanging. Moving means moving a playing piece from one sector to another. Exchanging means turning in playing pieces or Power Units for new playing pieces.

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Moving Infantry and Regiments: Infantry and Regiments can only move two sectors (or less) in the same round and only through sectors containing land. Infantry travels from one country to another by stopping on island sectors that lie between countries. When infantry enters an island or a home base, they cannot move any farther during that round, even if they have a movement count remaining. They must wait until the next round to move again.

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Moving Tanks and Heavy Tanks: Tanks can move three sectors or less in the same round. Like Infantry, they can only travel through sectors containing land, and they must stop on islands to get from one country to another. Also like Infantry, Tanks cannot enter and exit an island or home base in the same round, even if they have movement counts remaining. They must wait until the next round to move on.

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Moving Fighters and Bombers: Fighters and Bombers can move five sectors (or less) in the same round, but they cannot fly over sea lanes. Planes cannot enter and leave a home-base sector in the same round, but they can pass over island sectors without stopping.

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Moving Destroyers and Cruisers. Destroyers and Cruisers have a movement allowance of one and they are restricted to sectors containing water. They can sail into a country's beach sectors, home-bases, and island sectors, but they cannot travel diagonally across countries.

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Moving Megamissiles: A Megamissile can only be used once, but it can be sent into any sector desired, including a home-base or Reserve sector. It can even be directed to the same sector it was launched from.

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Exchanging Power Units for small playing pieces. Power Units are used to "buy" additional small playing pieces. The "cost" of a piece is the same as its power value; a player can exchange two Power Units for a new Infantry, ten Power Units for a new Destroyer, etc.

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Exchanging three small playing pieces for one large piece. When a player has collected three small playing pieces of the same type in the same sector, the player may exchange them for a large piece of the same type. The large piece is placed in the same sector the small pieces were in. A player can only exchange small playing pieces for the same type of large playing pieces, except in the case of the megamissiles.

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Exchanging the Megamissile. Megamissiles can be exchanged for a combination of existing playing pieces and Power Units. No "change" is given when pieces are exchanged for a megamissile.

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PLANNING COMMANDS

A player is selected to be the first official. When the players are ready, the official says "Ready", and then when everyone is ready, "Go". The official then turns the timer over to start the three minute countdown.

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The players then write down the five commands that they want carried out during the round.

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RULES

- * more than one piece may occupy the same sector
- * movement may be in any direction, including diagonally
- * pieces can only be moved once during a round
- * pieces can be moved and then exchanged in the same round--this counts as two moves

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- * pieces may be exchanged more than once in a round.
- * pieces cannot move in the same round after they have been exchanged. Exceptions are: pieces can be exchanged in Reserve and then moved into home base (two commands), and Megamissiles can be exchanged and then launched in the same round (also two commands).

When the time is up, the Official says "Stop". A player can act only on those commands written down at that time.

- 10 A player is required to issue at least one command in each round. If a player fails to move or exchange, the player must give up one power unit, or, if a player does not have any power units, the player must exchange the playing piece with the lowest power value for its equivalent in Power Units (or Power Units plus small pieces), give up the power unit, and place the extra power unit and pieces, if any, in Reserve.

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IMPLEMENTING COMMANDS

The implementation of commands is carried out in the following order:

- 20 1. Move and Exchange Pieces: Starting with the official and then going clockwise, players read aloud from their command pads and then move and exchange their pieces according to what is written. Illegal commands are canceled.
- 25 2. Resolve Conflicts: Conflict is resolved only after all four players have moved and exchanged their pieces. When a sector is occupied by more than one player, each player counts up the power values of its pieces in the conflicted sector. The player with the highest total power value wins the sector and captures all the opposing pieces, which are placed in the victor's Reserve. After conflict resolution, the captured pieces are exchanged to the victor's color.

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Rules for Resolving ties:

- * pieces belonging to the tied players retreat to the sectors they came from

- * pieces that were already in the tied sector at the beginning of the round do not retreat

- * if a piece retreats to a sector that is occupied by another player, this conflict is resolved following ordinary conflict resolution rules

5 * pieces only retreat once in a round, if a new tie exists in the sector the player's piece retreats to, only the player's opponent retreats

- * if there are three players in a conflicted sector and if the two players with the highest power values are tied, the tied players retreat and the remaining player's pieces stay in the sector

10 * if there are four players in a sector and the two players with the highest power values are tied, they retreat and the two remaining players battle it out, unless they are tied also

- * a player may attack and occupy an opponents home base, but the flag cannot be captured without an Infantry or Regiment piece among the occupying forces.

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Rules for resolving conflicts with Megamissiles

- * a megamissile's power value only counts in battle when it is launched. It has no defensive power and can be captured by any other piece.

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- * captured megamissiles go into Reserve and can only be launched from there.

- * Megamissiles cannot be moved, they can only be launched

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- * When a Megamissile is launched into a sector, all forces in the sector are destroyed and are removed from the board, leaving the sector unoccupied

- * If opposing Megamissiles are launched into the same sector, they are all destroyed, along with any other forces in the sector, and are removed from the board--leaving the

30 sector unoccupied

3. Distribute Power Units. A player gets one Power Unit for each opponent's country that the player occupies, regardless of the numbers of pieces involved or the number of sectors occupied. Only three Power Units can be received in a single round. No power units are received for occupying countries without a flag, islands, sea lanes, or a player's own country. Power units are placed in a player's reserve.

4. Resolve Captured Flags. This move must be carried out after all other conflicts are resolved and all Power Units are distributed. When a player's flag is captured, the victor takes possession of all the conquered player's remaining pieces and Power Units, including anything won during the round. The conquered player is then out of the game.

STARTING THE NEXT ROUND

The timer is passed to the person sitting to the left of the official. This person is the new official for the next round. The procedure is followed throughout the game, so that players can take turns acting as the official.

WINNING THE GAME

The game is won by the player who captures the flag of the last remaining opponent.

It is an object of this invention to provide a computerized version of POWER "The Game".

Disclosure of Invention

In accordance with one embodiment of the invention, there is provided a method for moving images of game pieces for a board game on a computer. The computer is provided with a memory, a processor, a display screen, and a user input interface. The user input interface comprises a cursor, a user control device for moving the cursor on the display screen, and an actuator for instructing the processor to execute a routine in

response to the position of the cursor. In accordance with the method, an image of the game board is provided on the display screen. The game board is divided into a plurality of sectors. Images of a plurality of game piece icons are provided on the display screen, as well as a cursor image. The cursor image is positioned on an image of a game piece icon positioned in a first sector. The processor is instructed to execute a routine to form a second image of the game piece icon and to drag the second image of the game piece icon from a first sector to a second sector. The second image of the game piece icon is dragged from the first sector to the second sector. The processor is then instructed to execute a release routine to position the second image of the game piece icon in the second sector. The method provides a convenient method for planning moves of game pieces into different sectors using a computer.

In another embodiment of the invention, there is provided a method for providing information to a user of a board game on a computer. The computer can be as described above. The board game is intended to be played in a plurality of rounds of play by a plurality of players. The method comprises providing, on the display screen, an image of the game board. The game board is divided into a plurality of sectors. Images of a plurality of game piece icons are also provided on the display screen. The game piece icons are positioned in a portion of the plurality of sectors. The images of the plurality of game piece icons are color coded according to player. Each game piece icon has an assigned point value. A zoom window display is provided on the display screen alongside the image of the game board for displaying information concerning a current round of play. The method is especially useful for keeping the game interesting when remote users are playing against each other or a user is player against the computer.

In another embodiment of the invention, there is provided a method for providing information to a user of a board game on a computer. The computer can be as previously described. The board game is designed to be played in a plurality of rounds of play by a plurality of players. The method is carried out by providing, on the display screen, an image of a game board. The game board is divided into a plurality

of sectors, including a plurality of headquarters sectors and a plurality of reserve sectors, each being adjacent to a headquarters sector. Each of the plurality of players is assigned a separate headquarters sector and a separate reserve sector adjacent to the headquarters sector. Images of a plurality of game piece icons are provided on the display screen as well as a cursor image. The cursor image is positioned on an image of a game piece icon positioned in a first sector. The processor is instructed to execute a routine to display a list of exchange options for the game piece icon positioned under the cursor. The user then selects an exchange option from the list, and the processor is then instructed to execute the selected exchange option. The method greatly speeds up exchanges as compared to the manual board game and makes the game move at a faster pace.

In another embodiment of the invention, there is provided a method for facilitating play of a board game on a computer. The computer can be as previously described. The game is played in a plurality of rounds of play by a plurality of players. At the completion of each round of play, the players are allocated power points and game pieces based on the results of the round of play. The method comprises providing an image of the game board on the display screen. The game board is divided into a plurality of sectors. Each of the plurality of players is assigned a separate headquarters sector and a separate reserve sector adjacent to the headquarter sector. A means for calculating and transferring to each players reserve sector, the accumulated power points and game pieces allocated to such player during each round, is provided in the processor. The accumulated power points and game pieces are displayed in the player's reserve sector at the end of each round. The computerized version of the game carries out the task of calculating and allocating power points and awarding captured pieces more quickly and more accurately and done by hand in the board version.

In another embodiment of the invention, there is provided a method for providing information to a user of a board game on a computer. The computer can be as previously described. An image of the game board is provided on the display screen,

the game board being divided into a plurality of sectors. Images of a plurality of game piece icons positioned in a portion of the plurality of sectors are also provided on the display screen. The images of the plurality of game piece icons are color coded according to player and each game piece icon has an assigned point value. A control pad is provided on the display screen alongside the image of the game board. The control pad has at least one button, bar or icon representing a play option

A cursor image is provided on the display screen. The cursor image is positioned on a desired button, bar or icon in the control pad. The processor is then instructed to execute a routine in response to the button, bar or icon positioned under the cursor.

The method enable information concerning the game to be more easily accessed than in the board version of the game.

In another embodiment of the invention, there is provided a method to facilitate start up of a computer game program for a board game on a computer. The computer can be as previously described. The board game is to be played in a plurality of rounds of play by a plurality of players. There is provided, on the display screen, a button, bar or icon to represent the command to load the computer game program, an option menu to enable the selection of a game, an option menu to enable the selection of an opponent, an option menu to enable the selection of a level of play, an option menu to enable the selection of a game board display, an option menu to enable the selection of a game time limit, and an option menu to enable the selection of a round time limit. The use of option menus to set up the computer version of the game greatly facilitate play.

In accordance with another embodiment of the invention, there is provided a method for providing information to a user of a board game on a computer. The computer can be as previously described. The board game is to be played in a plurality of rounds of play by a plurality of players. An image of the game board is provided on the display screen. The game board is divided into a plurality of sectors. Images of a plurality of game piece icons positioned in a portion of the plurality of sectors are also provided on the display screen. The images of the plurality of game piece icons are color coded

according to player and each game piece icon has an assigned point value. There is provided, on the display screen alongside the image of the game board, the following items: an image of a round countdown clock, an image of an end round button, an image of a game countdown clock, an image of a power value table, a player's name, and an image of a control pad having an exit button, a pause button, a sound and voice effects control button, a music control button, an on line help button, and a minimize button. The control pad provides a convenient mechanism to provide further control over the game in a manner not available to users of the board game.

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Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention, there is provided a method for playing POWER "the Game" with a computer. The computerized version is compared to the previously described original board version as follows:

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BACKGROUND

The background and object of the game are as previously described.

EQUIPMENT

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The equipment necessary for playing the computer version of the game is generally the game software and the computer equipment and peripherals necessary for running the software. It is preferred to run the program in a Microsoft Windows environment using a 486 or faster processor having at least 4 MeG of memory. The game software can be supplied on either diskettes or CD Rom. The shell used to control the program was Borland C++ V4.0. The software used for installation was Installshield v2.0 available from Stirling Technologies, Inc., 172 Old Mill Drive, Schaumburg, IL 60193. A Modem version of the software program was programmed using Greenleaf Comm++ V2.0 from Greenleaf Software Inc. 16479 Dallas Parkway, Suite 570, Dallas, Texas 75248. To provide graphics, Lantastic Artisoft was used.

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The game can be played by a single user, in which case artificial intelligence opponents

can be programmed into the software, or between multiple users using serial, network, or modem connection, such as on the Internet. It is necessary to install the software on all machines being used. The options can be displayed during the startup procedure. See Figure 15. The setup for a multiplayer game can also be implemented during startup.

Generally speaking, the computer used will have a memory, a processor, a display screen, and a user input interface. Preferably, the user input interface comprises a cursor, a user control device for moving the cursor on the display screen, and an actuator for instructing the processor to execute a routine in response to the position of the cursor. A mouse running in a Windows environment is a highly suitable actuator.

The display screen should be capable of providing an image of the game board which has been divided into a plurality of sectors, (see Figure 1). The game pieces are provided on the display screen in the form of images of a plurality of game piece icons. See Figure 2. The images of the plurality of game piece icons are color coded according to player. Each game piece icon has an assigned point value. A cursor image is also provided on the display screen.

In the place of the quick reference card, an image of a power value table can be provided on the display screen alongside the image of the game board,

In the place of the command pads, the cursor image is positioned on an image of a game piece icon positioned in a first sector, and the processor is instructed to execute a routine to form a second image of the game piece icon and to drag the second image of the game piece icon from a first sector to a second sector. The user then drags the second image of the game piece icon from the first sector to the second sector. The processor is then instructed to execute a release routine to position the second image of the game piece icon in the second sector. Mouse clicks are preferably used to issue the instructions. Preferably a track showing a path of the second image of the game

piece from the first sector to the second sector is displayed on the display screen. See track 22 in Figure 1. More preferably, the track is in the form of a strobing line and the second image is slightly larger than the first image. At the end of the planning stage of the round, the path of the track is stored in the memory of the computer.

5 During the execution stage of the round, the path of the track is retrieved from the computer memory and the first image of the game piece icon is moved along the path of the track from the first sector to the second sector.

PLAY

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Setting up

In the computerized version, set up is handled mostly by the computer. Set up is facilitated by providing, on the display screen, an icon to represent the command to load the computer game program; an option menu to enable the selection of a game; (see Figure 15); an option menu to enable the selection of an opponent, (see Figure 3); an option menu to enable the selection of a level of play, (see Figure 4); an option menu to enable the selection of a game board display, (see Figure 5); an option menu to enable the selection of a game time limit (see Figure 6); and an option menu to enable the selection of a round time limit. Biographical information concerning potential opponents can also be presented, as shown in Figure 14.

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Commands

To facilitate piece movement in the computerized version, the image of the game board is displayed on the display screen, along with images of a plurality of game piece icons. The icons are positioned in a portion of the plurality of sectors of the game board display. The images of the plurality of game piece icons are color coded according to player and each game piece icon has an assigned point value. A zoom window display 24 (see Figure 1) is provided on the display screen alongside the image of the game board for displaying information concerning a current round of play.

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When the cursor image is positioned on an image of a game piece icon positioned in

a first sector, an enlarged view 24' of a portion of the first sector (see Figure 8) can be displayed in the zoom window to facilitate movement of the game piece icons.

To facilitate exchanges, the computer program provides information to the user in the form of lists of exchange options. On the display of the game board, as shown in Figure 1, each of the plurality of players is assigned a separate headquarters sector 26a, 26b, 26c, 26d, and a separate reserve sector 28a, 28b, 28c, 28d, adjacent to the headquarters sector. Images of game piece icons and a cursor image are provided as previously described. The cursor image is positioned on an image of a game piece icon positioned in a first sector. The processor is then instructed to execute a routine to display a list of exchange options for the game piece icon positioned under the cursor. See Figure 9. The user can then select an exchange option from the list and instruct the processor to execute the selected exchange option.

PLANNING COMMANDS

In the computerized version of the game, commands are planned from a control pad 30. The control pads are provided on the display screen alongside the image of the game board. The control pad contains at least one button, bar or icon representing a play option. The cursor image is positioned on a desired item in the control pad and the processor is instructed to execute a routine in response to the item positioned under the cursor. In one embodiment, the control pad 30' (see Figure 10) contains a list of a player's moves for a subsequent round and the cursor image is positioned over the bar representing a cancellation of the move listed in the bar. In another embodiment, the control pad contains an end button 32 representing a command to resume play before an expiration of a round time limit and the cursor is positioned over the next play icon. When a player has completed their commands, clicking on the end button 32 will cause play to progress. Play is also facilitated by providing, on the display screen alongside the image of the game board, an image 36 of a round countdown clock.

RULES

The rules in the computerized version are the same as in the board version of the game. However, the computer has the ability to enforce certain rules. For example, it is preferred to provide a movement limit for each of the plurality of game piece icons in the computer memory. A means can then be provided in the processor for aborting illegal moves. For example, a means can be provided in the processor for aborting the dragging of the second image of the game piece icon in the event that the movement limit for the game piece represented by the second image is exceeded. Also, enforcement of a penalty for a player's failing to take a move can be automatically provided by the computer. This is accomplished by providing, in the processor, means for calculating and removing from a player's reserve sector, a power point from a player who fails to complete a movement during the round. The computerized also differs from the board version in that power points are automatically awarded at the end of each round.

IMPLEMENTING COMMANDS

1. Move and Exchange Pieces

The rules of moving and exchanging pieces are preferably the same as in the board version of the game. However, the moves are automatically carried out by the computer. The path of the track of the entered move is retrieved from the computer memory. The first image of the game piece icon is then moved along the path of the track from the first sector to the second sector.

Where images of a plurality of opposing game piece icons are positioned in one of the plurality of sectors, there is provided, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention, an indicator to show a total point value of the images of the game piece icons in the sector according to player. See Figure 12. Similarly, when the point value is evenly matched, there is provided, on the zoom window display, an indicator to show that the total point value is evenly matched and the opposing players are bounced from the contested sector. See Figure 11.

In a preferred embodiment, an image of the opposing player in a conflict is provided on the zoom window display alongside the image of the game board. See Figure 1.

2. Resolve Conflicts

- 5 The rules of conflict resolution are the same as in the board version of the game, but resolution is speeded up by the use of the computer.

3. Distribute Power Units

- 10 The distribution of the power units and captured pieces is automatically done in the computer version of the game. Generally speaking at the completion of each round of play, the players are allocated power points and game pieces based on the results of the round of play.

- 15 Each of the players is provided with a separate headquarters sector and a separate reserve sector adjacent to the headquarter sector. The processor is provided with a means for calculating and transferring to each players reserve sector, the accumulated power points and game pieces allocated to such player during each round. The accumulated power points and game pieces are displayed in the player's reserve sector at the end of each round. Where players have been awarded power points during a round of play, an image can be provided on the zoom window display which shows the total power points of all players. See Figure 13.
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4. Resolve Captured Flags

- 25 The resolution of captured flags is the same as in the board version of the game, except that reposting of the vanquished players flag to the victor's headquarters sector is done automatically.

STARTING THE NEXT ROUND

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In the computerized version of the game, an icon appears at the end of each round

which can be clicked on to begin the next round. Also displayed on the screen are an image of a game countdown clock, a player's name, and an image of a control pad 40 (see Figure 11) having an exit button, a pause button, a sound and voice effects control button, a music control button, an on line help button, and a minimize button. The icons for these buttons are shown in greater detail in Figure 17.

WINNING THE GAME

The game is won according to the same criteria as used in the board version of the game. In the computerized version, an indicator 50, 50' can be displayed to the user on the zoom window depending on whether the user has been victorious or vanquished. See Figures 18 and 19.

Brief Description of Drawings

Figure 1 is a pictorial representation of a computer screen embodying certain features of the present invention.

Figure 2 is a pictorial representation of game piece icons which can be used in invention as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a pictorial representation of a menu display.

Figures 4-7 are pictorial representations of control pad displays.

Figure 8 is a pictorial representation of a zoom window display.

Figure 9 is a pictorial representation of an option menu.

Figure 10 is a pictorial representation of a control pad.

Figures 11-13 are pictorial representations of zoom window displays.

Figure 14 is a pictorial representation of a information display.

Figures 15-16 are pictorial representations of a start up menus.

- 5 Figure 17 is a pictorial representation of control pad icons which can be used in the invention.

Figures 18-19 are pictorial representations of end of game displays.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method for moving images of game pieces for a board game on a computer having a memory, a processor, a display screen, and a user input interface comprising a cursor, a user control device for moving the cursor on the display screen, and an actuator for instructing the processor to execute a routine in response to the position of the cursor, said method comprising
 - 10 providing, on the display screen, an image of a game board, said game board being divided into a plurality of sectors;

providing, on the display screen, images of a plurality of game piece icons;
 - 15 providing, on the display screen, a cursor image;

positioning the cursor image on an image of a game piece icon positioned in a first sector;
 - 20 instructing the processor to execute a routine to form a second image of the game piece icon and to drag the second image of the game piece icon from a first sector to a second sector;

dragging the second image of the game piece icon from the first sector to the second
 - 25 sector; and

instructing the processor execute a release routine to position the second image of the game piece icon in the second sector.
- 30 2. A method as in claim 1 further comprising

providing, on the display screen, a track showing a path of the second image of the game piece from the first sector to the second sector.

3. A method as in claim 2 further comprising

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storing the path of the track in the memory.

4. A method as in claim 3 further comprising

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retrieving the path of the track from the computer memory and

moving the first image of the game piece icon along the path of the track from the first sector to the second sector.

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5. A method as in claim 2 wherein the track is a strobing line and the second image is slightly larger than the first image.

6. A method as in claim 1 further comprising

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providing, in the memory, a movement limit for each of said plurality of game piece icons; and

providing, in the processor, means for aborting the dragging of the second image of the game piece icon in the event that the movement limit for the game piece represented by the second image is exceeded.

25

7. A method for providing information to a user of a board game on a computer having a memory, a processor, a display screen, and a user input interface comprising a cursor, a user control device for moving the cursor on the display screen, and an actuator for instructing the processor to execute a routine in response to the position of the cursor, said board game to be played in a plurality of rounds of play by a

30

plurality of players, said method comprising:

providing, on the display screen, an image of a game board, said game board being divided into a plurality of sectors;

5

providing, on the display screen, images of a plurality of game piece icons positioned in a portion of the plurality of sectors, wherein the images of the plurality of game piece icons are color coded according to player and each game piece icon has an assigned point value; and

10

providing, on the display screen alongside the image of the game board, a zoom window display for displaying information concerning a current round of play.

15

8. A method as in claim 7 further comprising

providing, on the display screen, a cursor image;

positioning the cursor image on an image of a game piece icon positioned in a first sector; and

20

providing, on said zoom window display, an enlarged view of a portion of the first sector.

25

9. A method as in claim 7 further comprising

providing, on said zoom window display, an image of an opposing player.

30

10. A method as in claim 7 further comprising

providing, on the display screen, images of a plurality of game piece icons positioned in one of said plurality of sectors; wherein images of opposing game pieces icons are positioned in said sector; and

5 providing, on said zoom window display, an indicator to show a total point value of the images of the game piece icons in the sector according to player.

11. A method as in claim 7 further comprising

10 providing, on the display screen, images of a plurality of game piece icons positioned in one of said plurality of sectors; wherein images of opposing game pieces icons are positioned in said sector; and

15 providing, on said zoom window display, an indicator to show when a total point value of the images of the game piece icons in the sector according to player is evenly matched.

12. A method as in claim 7 wherein a portion of the plurality of players are assigned
20 power points at the completion of each round of play, said method further comprising

providing, on said zoom window display, an image which shows the total power points of all players.

25 13. A method for providing information to a user of a board game on a computer having a memory, a processor, a display screen, and a user input interface comprising a cursor, a user control device for moving the cursor on the display screen, and an actuator for instructing the processor to execute a routine in response to the position of the cursor, said board game to be played in a plurality of rounds of play by a
30 plurality of players, said method comprising:

providing, on the display screen, an image of a game board, said game board being divided into a plurality of sectors, wherein each of said plurality of players is assigned a separate headquarters sector and a separate reserve sector adjacent to the headquarter sector;

5

providing, on the display screen, images of a plurality of game piece icons;

providing, on the display screen, a cursor image;

10

positioning the cursor image on an image of a game piece icon positioned in a first sector;

instructing the processor to execute a routine to display a list of exchange options for the game piece icon positioned under the cursor;

15

selecting an exchange option from the list; and

instructing the processor to execute the selected exchange option.

20

14. A method for facilitating play of a board game on a computer having a memory, a processor, a display screen, and a user input interface comprising a cursor, a user control device for moving the cursor on the display screen, and an actuator for instructing the processor to execute a routine in response to the position of the cursor, said board game to be played in a plurality of rounds of play by a plurality of players, wherein at the completion of each round of play, the players are allocated power points and game pieces based on the results of the round of play, said method comprising:

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providing, on the display screen, an image of a game board, said game board being divided into a plurality of sectors, wherein each of said plurality of players is assigned a separate headquarters sector and a separate reserve sector adjacent to the headquarter

sector;

5 providing, in the processor, means for calculating and transferring to each players reserve sector, the accumulated power points and game pieces allocated to such player during each round; and

displaying such accumulated power points and game pieces in the player's reserve sector at the end of each round.

10 15. A method as in claim 14 further comprising

providing, in the processor, means for calculating and removing from a player's reserve sector, a power point from a player who fails to a movement during the round.

15 16. A method for providing information to a user of a board game on a computer having a memory, a processor, a display screen, and a user input interface comprising a cursor, a user control device for moving the cursor on the display screen, and an actuator for instructing the processor to execute a routine in response to the position of the cursor, said board game to be played in a plurality of rounds of play by a
20 plurality of players, said method comprising:

providing, on the display screen, an image of a game board, said game board being divided into a plurality of sectors;

25 providing, on the display screen, images of a plurality of game piece icons positioned in a portion of the plurality of sectors, wherein the images of the plurality of game piece icons are color coded according to player and each game piece icon has an assigned point value;

30 providing, on the display screen alongside the image of the game board, at least one control pad containing at least one button, bar or icon representing a play option;

providing, on the display screen, a cursor image;

positioning the cursor image on a button, bar or icon on the control pad; and

5 instructing the processor to execute a routine in response to the button, bar or icon positioned under the cursor.

10 17. A method as in claim 16 wherein the control pad contains a list of a player's moves for a subsequent round and the cursor image is positioned over a button, bar or icon representing a cancellation of a move.

15 18. A method as in claim 16 wherein the control pad contains a next play button, bar or icon representing a command to resume play before an expiration of a round time limit and the cursor is positioned over the next play button, bar or icon.

20 19. A method to facilitate start up of a computer game program for a board game on a computer having a memory, a processor, a display screen, and a user input interface comprising a cursor, a user control device for moving the cursor on the display screen, and an actuator for instructing the processor to execute a routine in response to the position of the cursor, said board game to be played in a plurality of rounds of play by a plurality of players, said method comprising:

providing, on the display screen,

25 an button, bar or icon to represent the command to load the computer game program;
an option menu to enable the selection of a game;
an option menu to enable the selection of an opponent;
an option menu to enable the selection of a level of play;
an option menu to enable the selection of a game board display;
30 an option menu to enable the selection of a game time limit; and
an option menu to enable the selection of a round time limit.

20. A method for providing information to a user of a board game on a computer having a memory, a processor, a display screen, and a user input interface comprising a cursor, a user control device for moving the cursor on the display screen, and an actuator for instructing the processor to execute a routine in response to the position of the cursor, said board game to be played in a plurality of rounds of play by a plurality of players, said method comprising:

providing, on the display screen, an image of a game board, said game board being divided into a plurality of sectors;

providing, on the display screen, images of a plurality of game piece icons positioned in a portion of the plurality of sectors, wherein the images of the plurality of game piece icons are color coded according to player and each game piece icon has an assigned point value;

providing, on the display screen alongside the image of the game board,

an image of a round countdown clock,

an image of an end round button,

an image of a game countdown clock,

an image of a power value table,

a player's name, and

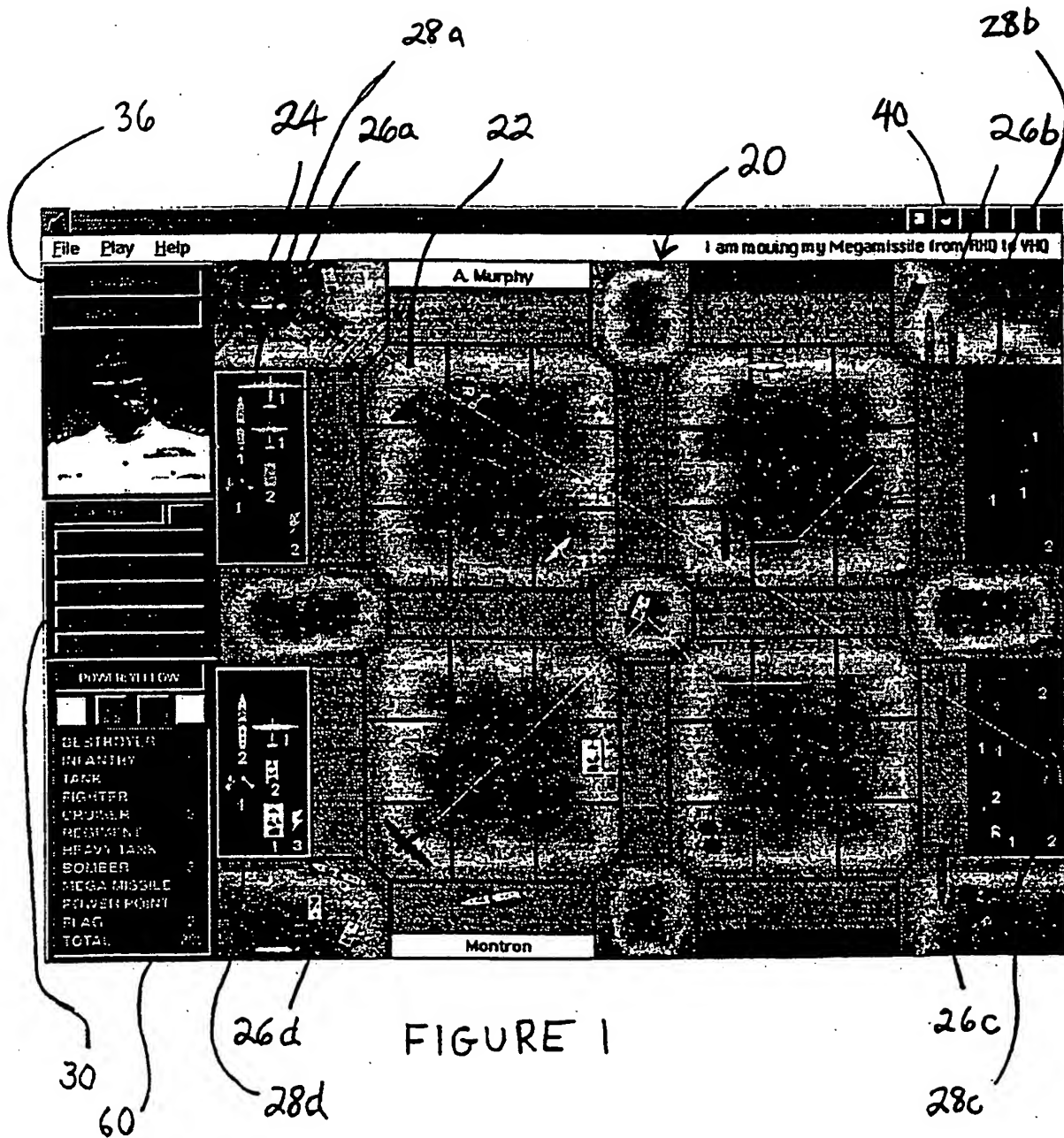
an image of a control pad having

an exit button,

a pause button,

a sound and voice effects control button,

a music control button,
an on line help button, and
a minimize button.



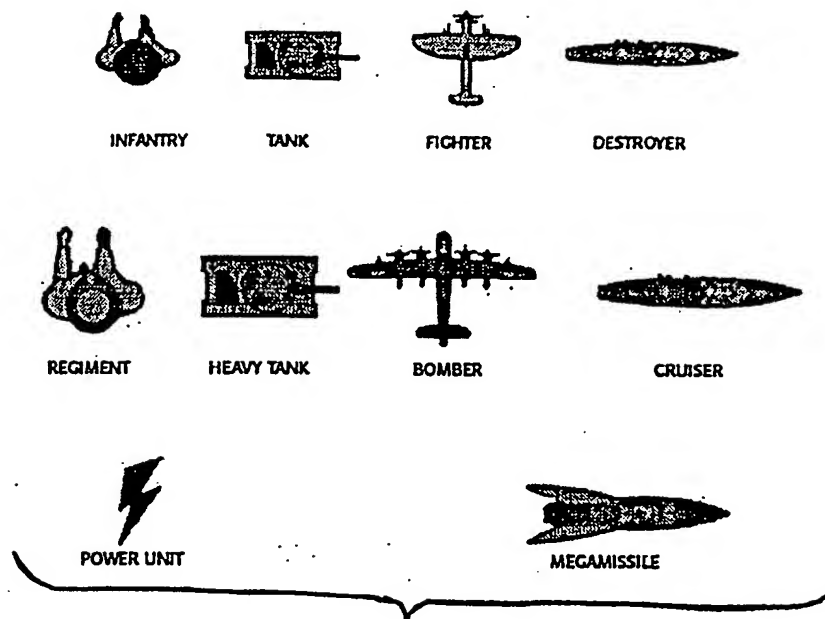


FIGURE 2

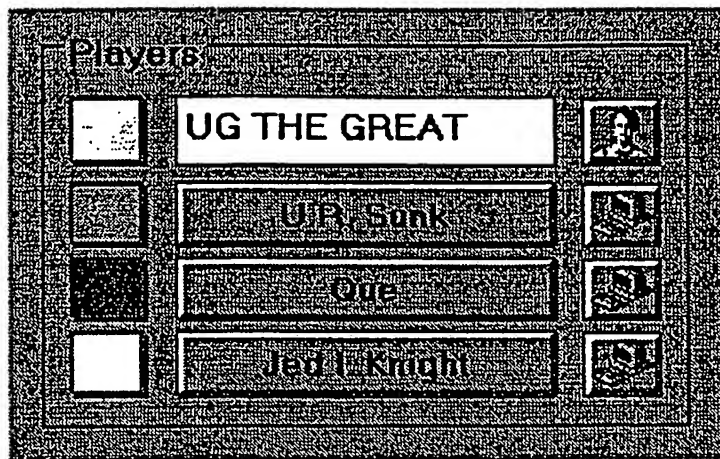


FIGURE 3

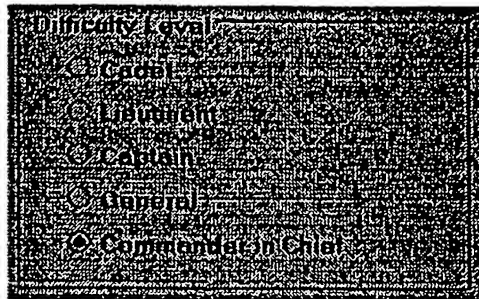


FIGURE 4

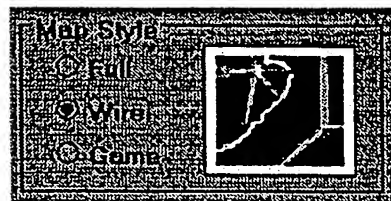


FIGURE 5

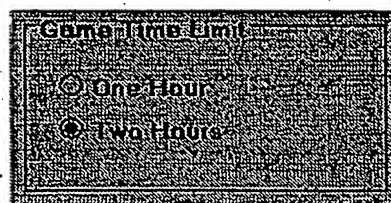


FIGURE 6

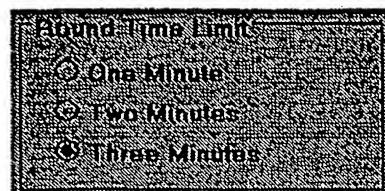


FIGURE 7

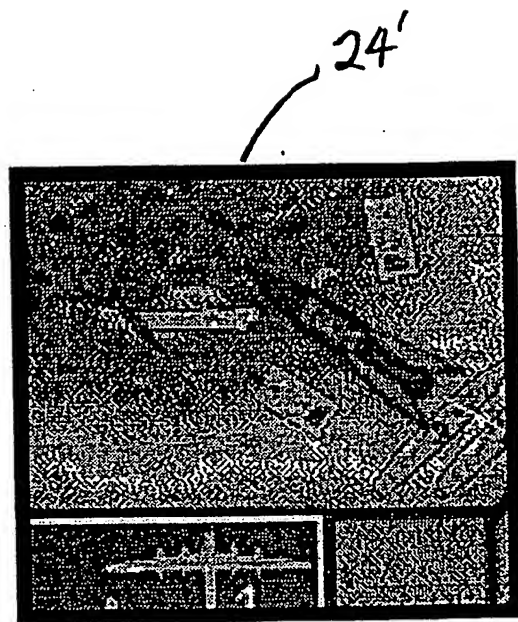


FIGURE 8

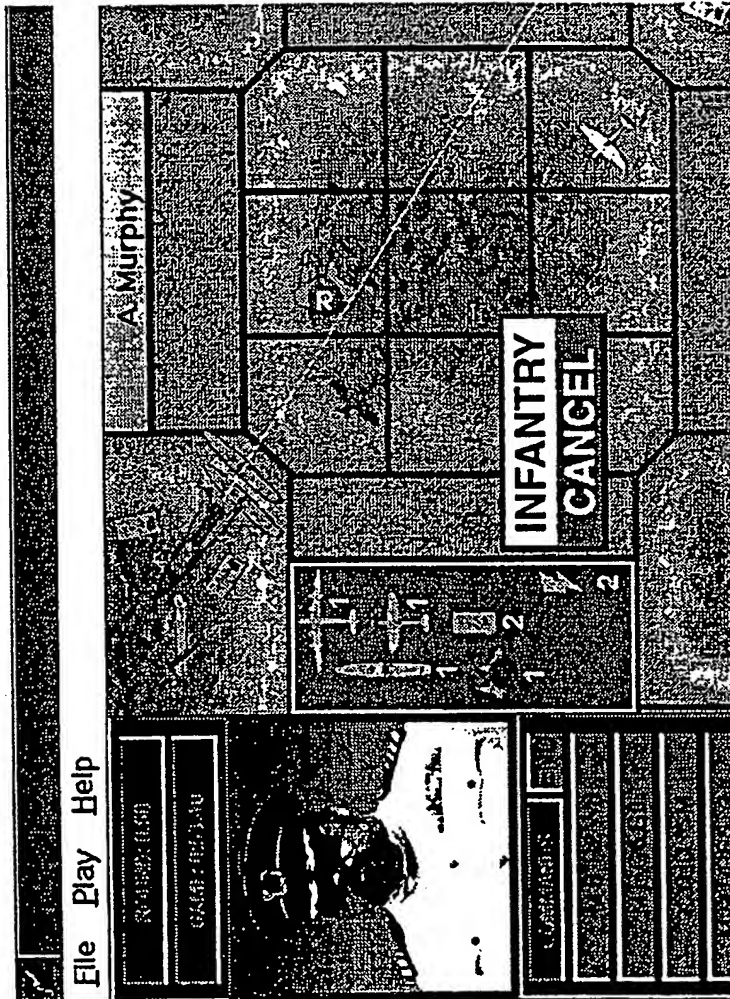


FIGURE 9

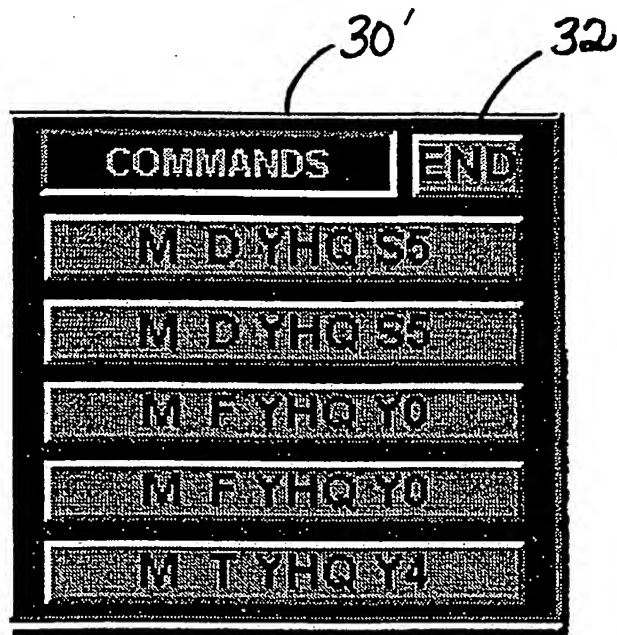


FIGURE 10

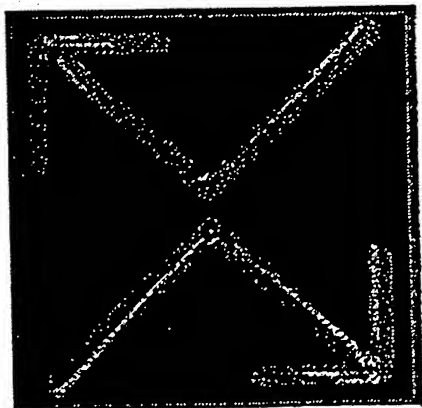


FIGURE 11

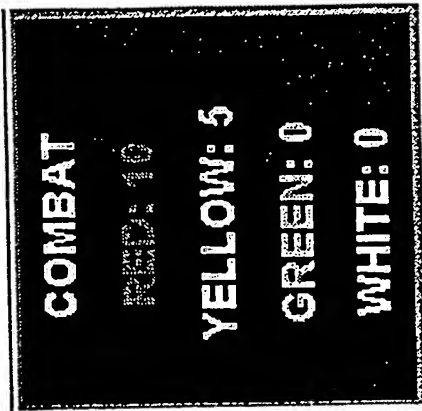


FIGURE 12



FIGURE 13

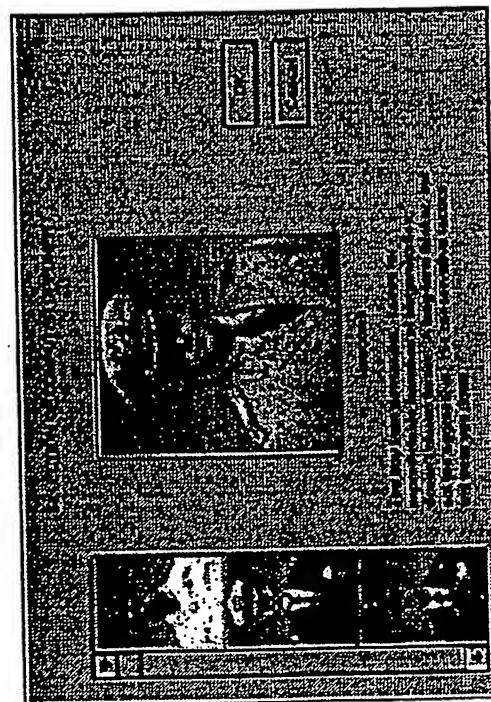


FIGURE 14

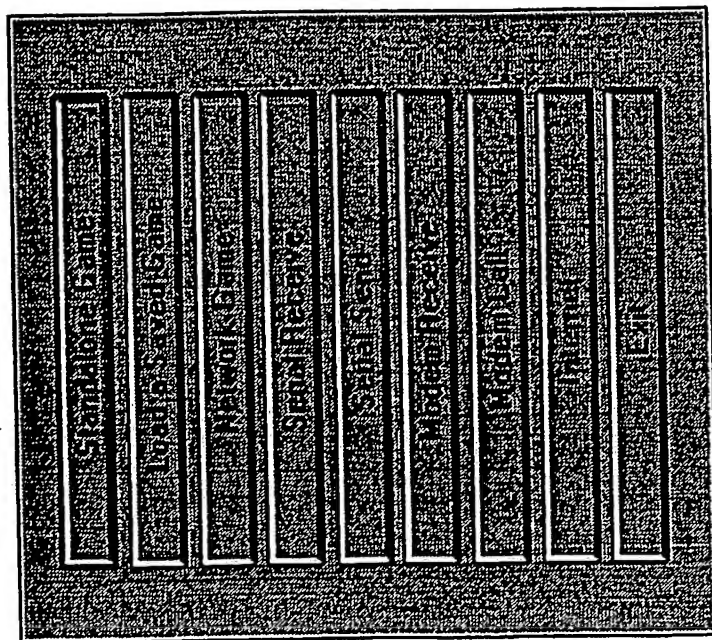


FIGURE 15

MULTIPLAYER GAME SETUP

Network:

Server File:

Player File:

Serial:

Port:

Baud:

Modem:

Port:

Baud:

Code:

(Default Modem)

Generic Hayes-compatible Modem

Generic AT 11 1200 Data Modem

Generic AT 15 14400 Data Modem

Generic AT 16 19200 Data Modem

Generic AT 17 38400 Data Modem

Internet:

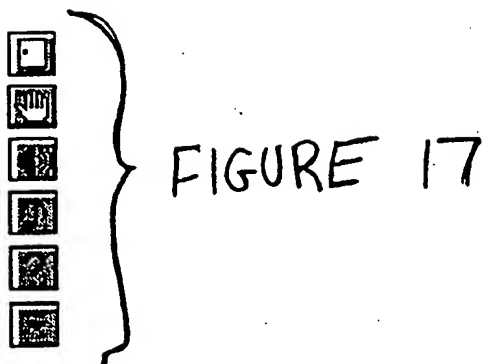
IP Address:

Subnet:

Gateway:

OK Cancel

FIGURE 16



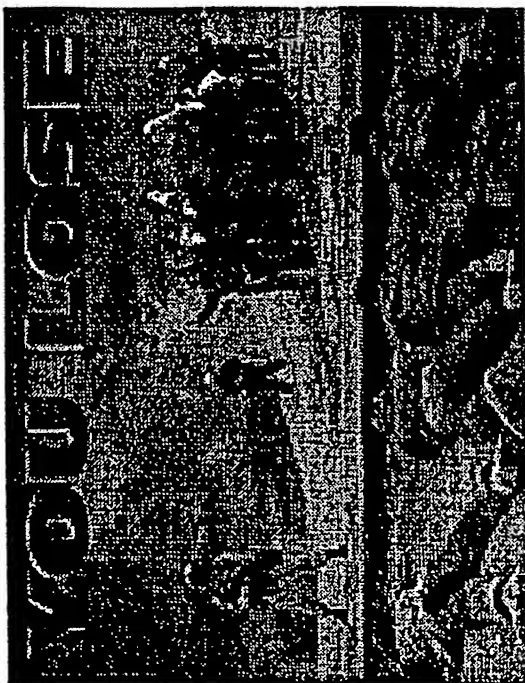


FIGURE 19



FIGURE 18

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US96/07053

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(6) :A63F 3/04; 9/22

US CL :273/262; 463/9

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 273/236, 262; 364/410; 463/9, 14

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

DIALOG

Search Terms: power (1w) game, board game

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	MicroProse Software, Inc., "Command HQ", 1990, pages 7 and 8, and 27 and 28.	1-12
X	MicroProse Software, Inc., "GLOBAL CONQUEST" Computer Simulation, 1992, pages 10, 21-25, and 66.	13-20

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Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☐

See patent family annex.

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O document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
P document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search


31 AUGUST 1996

Date of mailing of the international search report

02 OCT 1996

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